



Rag-time, c1905 - 175.11

c.36.93 : University Students Rags

*Includes Rags, Poppy Day, Mock Funerals etc
see also, May week,*

Cambridge rags – history feature – 59 11 20 & headlines

1888 11 06

Prince of Wales birthday - farm wagon drawn by two horses & packed with undergraduates in various attire followed by crowds parades street (6.11.88)

1897

University debate women's degrees; poll 1,707 to 661 against; exciting scenes at Senate House, bonfire Market Hill [1.8, 3.5, 8.10]

1897 05 21

After the Senate House scenes yesterday (when the University voted against degrees for women) there was a brief respite. It was the calm before the storm. About 7 o'clock there was a grand gathering of the clans. Undergraduates began trooping through the streets to what was obviously a pre-arranged rendezvous - the Market Hill. From the four corners of the square fire was opened upon everybody and everything within range. Bombs, hand-rockets, and every description of firework manufactured were flung haphazard into the crowd until the scene resembled nothing so much as the bombardment of a hostile camp, It is no exaggeration to say that hundreds of pounds worth of stuff were got rid of during the five hours the proceedings lasted 1897 05 21

1897 05 22

Undergraduate carnival following decision not to allow women to take degrees [3.5]

1897 11 17

Scarcely a week ago the Vice Chancellor entertained a distinguished company of judges at a banquet in the hall of Downing College, after which an adjournment was made to the rooms of one of the Fellows. Certain ardent spirits deemed it a favourable opportunity to indulge in a little diversion, suggested by the obtrusive handle of the door behind which the distinguished guests were killing time. "Why not fix it with stout wire to some neighbouring object?" The wire was forthcoming, the connection was made, and just sufficient length was allowed to admit of the door being opened a few inches - but no more. The judges tugged and tugged and tugged and all the Queens' judges and all the Queen's men would not make the door open sufficiently wide to enable them to get out. One valiantly put his hand through the small opening and tried to sever the wire with a carving knife. When he withdrew his hand it was copiously covered with red paint - and the wire remained intact. It is stated that the distinguished guests took this practical joke in good part - extract from the "Daily Mail" 1897 11 17

1898 11 07

Saturday was a typical "fifth" in Cambridge. Faithfully following the precedent set in former years a number of Varsity men and townspeople assembled in the market place, which for three hours or so was crowded with excitable and pugilistically-inclined youths, representing Town and gown. The Gown driven from pillar to post by the howling mob, appeared to be greatly terrified, and despite the vigilance of the police, of whom a large number were told off for special duty, the celebration was not entirely free from violence. Neither town nor gown missed many opportunities of displaying their physical prowess and many are the reports circulated as to the results of the pugilistic encounters that ensued 1898 11 07

1898 11 24

Great crowds had been assembling outside Great St Mary's and the railings before the Senate House with the exception of a pathway of about five yards which the police were endeavouring to keep clear for those attending the honorary degree ceremony for Lord Kitchener. It was evident that the constables were having hard work in keeping the crowds from encroaching. At length the looked-for rush took place and such was the force that the police were quite powerless to check it. A general scramble to get upon the railings ensued when without the slightest warning the railings suddenly gave way and fell outwards carrying many unfortunate persons to the ground with them. The solidity of this great piece of ironwork is well known and it is wonderful that more were not seriously injured 1898 11 24 [2.8]

1898 11 25

The enthusiasm aroused by Lord Kitchener's visit to Cambridge increased as the day wore on. Varsity men, brimful of high spirits, gathered in the streets in large numbers. For upwards of an hour thousands of people paraded the streets. It was not until eight o'clock that the cries of "bonfire" were heard. The call was eagerly taken up by hundreds of undergraduates and some boxes from a shop hard by were seized on as the fuel with which to start the blaze. Bands of men bearing massive wooden structures came up from all quarters and the flames mounted to an enormous height, so that the fire could be seen for miles around 1898 11 25

1899 02 09

The attention of the University Council of Senate has been called to the disorder which attended the bonfire on November 24th, 1898 when the actual destruction of property was considerable. They recommend that members of the University are forbidden to take part in making or lighting of bonfires in public places within the precincts of the university. Members offending will render themselves liable to be punished by suspension, rustication, expulsion or otherwise 1899 02 09

1899 02 17

Yesterday afternoon the attention was attracted by what seemed to be an imposing funeral procession. But this was no ordinary funeral for instead of the usual hearse an open landau led the way and this

was occupied by three young men who wore "the trappings of woe" very lightly. Following were nearly a score of hansoms. It is alleged that at the end of last term at student of Queens' college "ragged" a couple of Freshmen's rooms. The matter was reported to the University authorities who came to the conclusion he should be sent down for a year. His friends resolved to show their disapproval. Before the train left the company whistled the "Dead March" and it left amid ringing cheers 1899 02 17

1899 11 02

When residents in St Andrew's street, Cambridge, saw a procession of cabs passing onward "all mournful and slow" to the railway station the people knew that someone had been sent down from the University. From Emmanuel College a youth emerged and under a shower of rice made hurriedly for the cab waiting at the door. The driver, "Gentleman Joe" wore a tall hat draped with crape, and so did the drivers of some four cabs what followed. The hero of the hour entered the Great Northern Station, the train moving out to the strains of "Auld Lang Syne". Meanwhile the cabbies grove back to their respective stands. They were of more cheerful aspect on the return journey and each puffed a festive cigar 1899 11 02

1899 11 07

Almost as soon as it was dark a large number of youths made their way to Cambridge Market Hill which was in a short time alive to the crackling and bangings of the smaller fireworks. The 'Varsity', after hall time, joined the townspeople and from eight to eleven there was a roaring, rushing crowd of several hundreds about the hill and neighbouring streets. Certain of the townsmen who had begun the day not to wisely by profusely drinking were responsible for the greater part of the disorder and were seized and marched off by the ever-vigilant gentlemen in blue - 1899 11 07

1900

1900 03 03

There was great rejoicings in Cambridge on the relief of Ladysmith and despite the edict sent forth by the University authorities the conduct of the undergraduate element was again such as to necessitate the intervention of the police. The Varsitymen managed to draw police attention off the market place to scenes elsewhere and, during their temporary absence, succeeded in lighting a bonfire. There was great excitement as one by one the wooden frameworks of the stalls was committed to the flames. The band-stand on Christ's Pieces was attacked and the seats removed to the Market and quickly consumed. Similar damage was occasioned in all parts of the town 00 03 03

1900 03 05

The University has the power to stop these things. But what did the University do to prevent the destruction of property – practically nothing. A year ago an edict forbidding bonfires was issued, that edict was torn to shreds. The University cannot afford to have it said that the people of Cambridge had property stolen or destroyed in order to furnish forth an undergraduate carnival. The firmness of the Mayor and his brother magistrates in dealing with the men who came up at the police-court has been much commended. The Barnwell rough belongs to the past. The unfortunate thing is that his mantle had fallen upon the rowdy undergraduate of the present 00 03 05

1900 03 06 c

Sir – In your editorial you seem to imply that all the damage done during the Ladysmith rag was caused by undergraduates. As a matter of fact all the windows that were broken were broken by townsmen. You seem to have quite forgotten that the prosperity, nay the very existence of the town depends upon University men, and a very good picking the town gets out of the Varsity men. The fines imposed by the magistrates were simply outrageous, passing all bounds of common sense and justice. – Spectator

1900 03 07

The ire of the undergraduate once roused, not even the powerful hand of Alma Mater suffices to entirely quell the wrath that has been kindled. An attacking force of undergraduates gathered many recruits as it made its way along Hills Road and it was at once seen that the objective was the Mayor's residence in Brooklands Avenue. They were dismayed to find the thoroughfare barricaded by a posse of police constables. The mob made a bold rush. The police partially yielded but not more than half of the 'Varsity flank passed through the cordon when the police closed ranks. The trap that had been set proved effective for those who marched triumphantly down the Avenue had not negotiated more than fifty yards when they were encountered by the Proctors mustered in strong force CDN 1900 03 07

1900 03 10

Cambridge is beginning to tire of the "rag". We cannot go on celebrating the relief of Ladysmith forever. Nor can the more right-minded citizens countenance meaningless ebullitions against magistrates, however they may disagree with their decisions in the police court. It was confidently expected that if the undergraduates charged with assaulting the police were convicted there would be nothing short of a riot in which a gigantic fire, a fabulous number of barrels of tar and a torchlight procession were to be a conspicuous feature. It is true there was plenty of noise and plenty of aimless rushing about the streets but it all ended in nothing 00 03 10

1900 03 12

The list of those who have signed the petition in favour of a free pardon for those undergraduates who were recently convicted by the Cambridge magistrates of felony during the Ladysmith celebrations, fully justifies its description as the petition of Cambridge. Over 1,200 residents in the town and members of the University have put their names to it. Cambridge Town and University are unanimous in the hope that the hot-headed enthusiasts of Ladysmith Day may be forgiven for what was done in the excitement of the hour. It remains with the Home Secretary to decide whether the prayer of the petition is to be granted 00 03 12

1900 03 16

The Home Secretary has granted the petition of Cambridge and has recommended the Queen to grant a free pardon to all the defendants. He does not say the undergraduates did not commit felony, but there were extenuating circumstances. This is undoubtedly a slap in the face for the magistrates who share the responsibility for these convictions. Clearly the Home Secretary does not think much of their law, and he thinks less of their capacity for judging of evidence. Some timid people may be apprehensive lest it encourages the demonstratively-inclined magistrate to be more demonstrative in the future 00 03 16

1900 05 21

Cambridge has celebrated the relief of Mafeking and it has done it right nobly. There was no recurrence of the riotous scene witnessed on the occasion of the relief of Ladysmith, no destruction of property. This was due to one thing, the discretion shown by the powers that be in organising a bonfire on Midsummer Common. People poured in in thousands from the country in anticipation of the festivities and so great was the influx that some streets were rendered well nigh impassable. Still, the crowds were orderly and the police had no difficulty regulating the traffic 00 05 21

1900 11 06

The 'Fifth' was celebrated on Cambridge in a very orderly fashion. The effigies that once characterised Guy Fawkes Day were conspicuous by their almost entire absence. The best attempt at an effigy was made by three or four men who were rigged out in minstrel fashion and paraded the streets with a vehicle in which were seated representations of Mr Kruger and his wife. This attracted a good deal of attention until the rain came and washed the colour from the faces of the dejected looking figures, and sent the minstrels home 00 11 06

1901 05 07

Sanguine people imagined that the rejoicing for the return of the South African Volunteers would pass off quietly. A parental Corporation had taken the wise precaution to secure materials for a fine bonfire on Midsummer Common to prevent the destruction of property. This time it was a plan doomed to

partial failure. The fire was comparatively short-lived and undergraduates found a wealth of additional fuel in King Street where a wooden hoarding was dragged off to the Common and triumphantly flung upon the bonfire. Policemen stood guard over the bandstand on Christ's Pieces 01 05 07

1901 11 06

There is little survival of the old celebrations of "The Fifth" in Cambridge, save one or two groups of youngsters with an eye to stray coppers carried around "guys" which may have been effigies of anything. Builders, having a recollection of losses of material on bonfire nights, had men guarding scaffolding poles, but they were not called upon. The most noticeable thing was the fog – thick, damp and irritating. It was not the kind of weather suitable to a rag or even a bonfire in the back-yard. It was better fun sitting by a snug fireside than standing with cold hands and feet in a choking fog letting off small pyrotechnic fry CDN 1900 11 06

1901 11 11

It being the King's 60th birthday it was expected that nightfall would be the occasion for rowdyism and possibly an attempt to illuminate Cambridge Market Hill. The authorities cleared away the stalls, but their action left the historic centre of all "rags" open and free for the antics of the crowd. For a long time nothing occurred except the explosion of a few crackers or the discharge of a pistol from a window overlooking the hill. Large numbers of police were hustled about considerably, and were compelled to defend themselves, but compared with other 'rags', they did not have to exert themselves very much. It was a very tame, spiritless affair that will doubtless be deemed by the "bloods" to have been a complete failure, considering that practically no damage to property was done CDN 1901 11 11

1902 02 28

The Cambridge Review refers to the conduct of three undergraduates whose behaviour disgusted all respectable people at the New Theatre. But the acts to which reference is made – loud talking during the performance, inopportune laughter and the evident watchfulness for double entendre – are condemned by the great body of undergraduate theatre-goers. To drag an offender out during the middle of the play would cause disturbance and annoyance to the audience. Mr Redfern has instead reported their names to their tutors who have seen that punishment has been administered. The few silly young men who still act in this way will find it prudent to amend their manners. 02 02 28

1902 06 03

Peace in South Africa produced strife in Cambridge – one of those fierce contests between the police and the united forces of town and gown which, combined with the destruction of property, constitutes a "rag". In King Street a large double gate was attacked as wood for a bonfire but a vigorous-looking dame appeared from the other side. Her only weapon was a duster, but such a formidable appearance did she present that the crowd melted away before her advance. Skirmishers went towards the Circus of Varieties to obtain a hoarding but this was well guarded and soon they were retracing their steps. 02 06 03

1902 06 04

The following notice has been issued by the Vice Chancellor of Cambridge University. "Whereas the attendance of members of the University at certain public exhibitions, performances and places of dramatic entertainment has been productive of grave disorder, notice is given that the attendance of any member in statu pupillari at the Circus of Varieties, Auckland Road, is prohibited and will render him liable to be punished by suspension, rustication, expulsion or otherwise." 02 06 04

1903 01 02

Rag when French awarded Honorary Degree thought 'likely to become historic as improbable scenes will ever occur again' 03 01 02

1903 04 14

The accounts of 'ragging' at a Cambridge Theological College led to an interview with a Cambridge minister acquainted with one of the victims – the man who had the adornment of his upper lip removed by amateur barbers. The undergraduate did not have the whole of his moustache removed, but only half of it, the operation performed while he was held down in his bed. He had a splendid moustache. It was quite the pride of his mother who was terribly upset over it. His life has been made thoroughly unbearable by his tormentors, who wanted him to give up preaching. They have broken all his windows several times and the young fellow has been thoroughly broken down and ill. 03 04 14

1903 05 14

A section of noisy undergraduates at a performance of 'Naughty Nancy' at the New Theatre behaved in an unruly manner. Remarks, many of them in bad taste, and incessant shouting delayed the progress of the comedy and Mr Redfern, the Managing Director appeared on the stage. For 20 years he had had the management and until the last three or four such conduct was perfectly unheard of. He said he was sure they would cease this ungentlemanly conduct but if they continued he would simply drop the curtain and the performance would cease. Cries of 'Good old Redfern' were heard at the conclusion of the protest. They speedily subsided and the performance was concluded quietly. 03 05 14

1903 11 06

Time once was when the concentrated animosity between Cambridge Town and Gown found annual outlet on 'The Fifth'. There are many old inhabitants who have seen the traditional riots gradually die down with the building up of mutual ties between University and Town. Athletic Varsitymen and pugilistic townsmen no longer belabour each other; they join issue in attempts at bonfires with police baiting thrown in as a sideline. At Castle End undergraduates managed to secure a shutter with the intention of making it the nucleus of a bonfire; a constable was rolled to the ground, his helmet knocked off and his whistle and truncheon lost before more policemen arrived and three arrests were made – one member of the Varsity, a soldier and a townsman 03 11 06

1904 02 02

There was another infringement of the rules for preserving order at the Cambridge Theatre and three undergraduates were ejected. They occupied seats in the front row of the stalls and commented somewhat too audibly on the subject of the piece. When requested to leave two quietly complied but their companion remained seated and accordingly two attendants were instructed to remove him by force. The undergraduate, seeing that his ejection had been determined upon, capitulated in time to avoid the indignity of being roughly handled. "Don't take me out, my dear sir", he pleaded. "I will go out quietly". He did so. It was not necessary on this occasion to stop the performance. 04 02 02

1904 03 01

All Cambridge united in welcoming King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra to open the new University buildings known as the Sedgwick Museum, the Squire Law Library, Botanical and Medical Schools in Downing Street. Cambridge University has never stagnated but kept pace with the demands of the time. Newer universities have their place in the general scheme of things but they can never supplant our ancient university of Cambridge, nor her twin sister on the banks of the Isis. With the increasing spread of education their prosperity increases.

1904 03 02

The Royal visit to Cambridge was followed by an undergraduate 'rag' which caused wanton destruction of public and private property even though a large body of police, included mounted men, were on duty. One policeman guarding the proctors was singled out for a little 'baiting'. As they surged around he took out his baton which was immediately snatched from his hand. Now unprotected the affair seemed likely to develop into a serious disturbance but mounted policemen began to harry the crowd who fled before the horsemen. Many youths annoyed the riders by throwing crackers near their horses. One animal was so startled by an explosion that it threw its rider and careered across Parker's Piece.

1904 03 15

St John's College students carried out a mock funeral for an undergraduate who was ejected from the New Theatre on three occasions in one week for having infringed the rules adopted to preserve order. The college authorities decided he should be 'sent down' and his friends showed organised a process of 13 cabs which filed along the streets at funeral pace to the railway station. A halt was made outside the New Theatre to allow the travellers to indicate their disapproval of the management. During the whole journey shouts, singing and the blowing of horns was continuous. 04 03 15

1904 04 02

New Theatre production again disrupted, scenes howled down; undergraduates fined for obscene language [4.5]

1904 11 07

The results of the fifth of November 'rag' in Cambridge were more or less serious injuries to two policemen, considerable damage to private property and several police-court summonses. A little boy engaged in firing a squib in the midst of a 'ragging' party proceeding along Jesus Lane was knocked down by a cyclist and rendered insensible. Fortunately he was soon revived by a number of undergraduates who at once attended to him. One man fainted and another was admitted to Hospital suffering from injuries to the head caused by his being knocked down by a cab. 1904 11 07

1904 11 10

The King's birthday is one of those occasions upon which a certain section of the 'Varsity and Town consider it necessary to turn themselves into public nuisances. This year they avoided the Borough police by making a raid on Chesterton. The mob made tracks for Midsummer Common with the object of having a bonfire. Several hundred crossed Jesus Green bridge where a council of war was held. Carlyle Road was mention as leading to fuel for the fire but a number of the belligerents made an incursion down a private road. Several fences were broken down and flames shot into the air as the surreptitiously-obtained timber was thrown on to the fire. No police appeared on the scene, though a number of members of the Force were on duty on the borough side of the river 04 11 10

1905 03 04

'Sultan of Zanzibar' hoax. A practical joke of a particularly senseless character has just come to light. The incident recalls a similar hoax that was effected during the visit to England of the Shah of Persia years ago. The CDN became apprised of the visit but in view of the former hoax refrained from publishing any account and our suspicion was confirmed by a telegram from the Carlton Hotel saying 'No member of the Sultan of Zanzibar's suite was away from London'. The Mayor was very cautious and took care not to make any elaborate preparations for the reception of the visitors. 05 03 04
The death of Willie Clarkson, the London theatrical costumier and make-up expert recalls two of the greatest hoaxes of the century. The hero of the famous visit of the Sultan of Zanzibar to Cambridge and of the Abyssinian dignitaries to the Dreadnought was H. De Vere Cole. But he would not have escaped exposure but for Mr Clarkson's masterly make-up. He became more famous than many of the actors and actresses who he costumed and gowned during his association with the stage. 34 10 13

1905 03 06

Undergraduates started a bonfire on Parker's Piece with the aid of a wooden fence from the front of a house in Melbourne Place. One of the proctors who arrived on the scene before the appearance of the police became the object of the amusement of a large number of roughs, some of whom, after having smashed the hats of the 'bulldogs' began to hustle him. He escaped actual injury owing chiefly to the stalwart and vigorous defence of the 'bulldogs' assisted by one or two townsmen. The fire was extinguished by a bucket of water 05 03 06b

1905 05 02

The University and the New Theatre have joined hands to warn undergraduates that ungentlemanly behaviour will not be tolerated. A warning was placed in every programme and supplemented by a speech between the acts by J.W. Clark, registrator of the University and Chairman of the Theatre

Company. His words were received with respect by the audience, already in high spirits by a splendid production of the 'Mikado'. He was loudly cheered as he walked on to the stage and at the conclusion he was accorded quite an ovation. 05 05 02a

1905 11 05

Sir – twenty years ago undergraduates at Oxford had two types of 'rag'. On the 5th of November we went out and provoked people who didn't wear caps and gowns to hit us, and we hit them back. Then whenever our college had done something great in sport we burnt up a good deal of the college property in the 'quad' and paid for it in out 'wattels' at the end of term. But when the authorities thought there had been too much friendly hitting they used to 'gate' their colleges en bloc at nine o'clock. Now Cambridge undergraduates have discovered a third sort – plundering, robbing and annoying citizens to get wood for bonfires. This is hooliganism and the Riot Act might not be out of place – V.S.N. 05 11 15

1905 11 06

It is a recognised custom in Cambridge, which no amount of protest seems able to abolish, to make the celebration of the Fifth the occasion for a rag. This year it fell on a Sunday but this did not deter them and a huge bonfire was started on Midsummer Common. The chief sufferer was G.P. Hawkins whose premises in Parsonage Street was attacked during the Nelson rag and on Saturday another unsuccessful assault was made. But on Sunday several hundred undergraduates returned, smashed the fence and seized egg cases, barrels and a tarpaulin to add to the flames. 05 11 06b [2.16, 1.7]

1905 11 06

The information that a number of Varsity and Town roughs broke into Mr Hawkins' premises on Sunday night and stole and destroyed property to the value of £20 will surprise even Cambridge people. To disturb the peace of a Sabbath by forcibly entering a tradesman's premises and to burn the stolen material in a public place is just as truly a robbery as if the marauders had broken into the Guildhall and taken £20 from the safe. We trust the University authorities will look facts in the face and that such activities will be promptly scotched. 05 11 06a-d

1905 11 09

Sir - On 1st March 1904 a sergeant of the Metropolitan Police, sent to Cambridge on the occasion of the King's visit, was violently assaulted and kicked by an undergraduate. After six months' illness, during which his pay amounting to £54 was paid by the Borough of Cambridge, he was pensioned off as unfit for service. On 5th November 1904 a constable, having taken one undergraduate into custody, was brutally attacked by others and was left insensible. He has been on the sick list ever since and pensioned off. All members of the University should co-operate to prevent such scenes of riot and disorder - H.M. Taylor, Trinity College. 05 11 09

1905 11 09

It is almost incredible that any undergraduate should so far demean himself as to treat a policeman with the blackguard violence of a hooligan. If we have hitherto been inclined to take a lenient view of the occasional destruction of property it was because we felt sure the grosser acts were the work of town loafers who were encouraged by thoughtless undergraduates. But those who took part in gutting a shop should suffer the legal penalty and not be saved from imprisonment by University authorities. – Cambridge Review 05 11 09a

1905 11 10

Rag – great damage to property – 05 11 10 a & b

1905 11 11

One does not associate Sidney Sussex College with the rowdyism that is rampant in Cambridge. Yet on Saturday night the porter found the door of his lodge refused to open: it had been securely screwed up and he was a prisoner. After a troubled night he was aroused by the bedmakers' loud ringing at the

gate and saw there was no option but to smash the window and escape through the jagged aperture to admit the waiting and wrathful ‘bedders’. 05 11 11a [2.15]

1905 11 15

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1906 05 12

One of the most disgraceful ‘rags’ occurred a few days ago. An undergraduate had been celebrating his birthday by giving a party to his intimates where they dined too well. Shortly before midnight the raiders returned to the room but their victim had not retired and succeeded in repelling the onslaught. Later they came back, breaking and destroying indiscriminately. The graduate was a great traveller and his room contained many valuable Eastern trophies which he had collected in out-of-the-way parts of the world. 06 05 12a

1907 02 21

The University Vice Chancellor has condemned the undergraduates who wrecked Kier Hardy’s meeting at the Guildhall. It is one of the University traditions that honest opinions, however unpopular, should receive a fair hearing. Cambridge is not unsympathetic towards the Labour Party and its leader should have been given a chance of expressing his views. 07 02 21

1907 03 30

About ten years ago some undergraduates of St John’s College removed one of the stone balls from Clare College Bridge. They transferred it to a Rob Roy canoe but this capsized and the purloined ball sank to the bottom of the Cam. There it has remained ever since. One of the other balls was put in its place and a new one made, now partly obscured by ivy. (Item from the ‘Table Talk’ column on 1st April) 07 03 30b

1907 05 03

Trinity Hall undergraduates have subscribed £6 3s. towards the fund for repairing the damage done to Mr Glasscock’s cab on the night of the visit of Kier Hardy to Cambridge. It was smashed beyond repair but as vehicle was not covered by the Riot Damages Act he had no compensation for the loss sustained. At the commencement of term the News published the facts, calling the attention of undergraduates to the heavy loss they had caused and inviting them to put the matter right. 07 05 03

1907 11 09

Few ‘Guys’ on Nov 5th - mainly a firework festival [2.20]

1907 11 12

The visit of Royalty to Cambridge was made an excuse for an outburst of destructive exuberance on the part of undergraduates, errand boys, and others. A rush was made for the bandstand on Christ’s Pieces, but it was guarded by police so they proceeded to Victoria Bridge, which was held by sturdy country policemen. Some then kindled a fire near the Cutter Ferry, dragging some palings from the Ferry House, which filled the souls of the ‘raggers’ with glee. 07 11 12

1907 11 16

Tolerant attitude to Rag but police prevent Market Hill bonfire [2.21]

1907 11 26

A ‘mock funeral’ saw a procession of 100 cabs boarded by undergraduates who scrambled to the roof of the vehicles for the journey to the railway station. The cabbies had decorated their whips with pieces of crepe and ‘mourners’ with mouth organs and a miniature bagpipes played hideous music. The ‘deceased’ was ‘sent down’ for being out of Caius College after midnight – he had gone to London but his car had broken down. 07 11 26

1907 12 10

“For an isolated policeman to be attacked and beaten to death by eight or ten students is an occurrence which happens almost once a week at Cambridge or Oxford”, writes a correspondent in the ‘Messagero’, (Rome). He adds that it is common for a group of about 50 undergraduates to wreck a shop as if a dynamite bomb had exploded in it when “the honest tradesman had refused them credit”. In the theatre undergraduates do what they like, interrupt the actresses, start discussions with the actors on the stage, beat the orchestra and upset the stalls, he alleges. 07 12 10

1908 05 16

Mayor receives £1 ‘conscience money’ for damage caused 5 Nov 1905 [2.22]

1908 06 05

There has been an Alpine fever amongst undergraduates, finding a vent in climbing trees along the Backs. The wireless telegraphy station on the Huntingdon Road has been the site of the latest exploit. This is a pole over 200 feet in height which receives messages from Cumnor Hill near Oxford. Two undergraduates merrily commenced the ascent by means of the metal spikes driven in at convenient intervals and managed to reach the top. But the return voyage was not so easily accomplished and they reached terra firma with a distinct sigh of relief. It is a matter for common wonder what object will next receive the attention of this strange species. CWN 08 06 05 p5

1908 06 05

A number of prominent rowing men, objecting to the known Socialistic proclivities of Messrs Gomme and Bull, and believing they had dared to hold a Fabian meeting within the precincts of Trinity Hall, fetched them forcibly from the rooms of a friend and ducked them in a bath which had been prepared in the middle of the Court. A circular was issued that was sent to every Member of Parliament, setting out the facts. The ‘ragogers’ have been punished. 08 06 05 p5

1908 03 20

Undergraduate misbehaviour, New Theatre – 08 03 20a

1908 12 03

There is a rule at the New Theatre which degrees that undergraduates may not charter a box unless they are accompanied by a lady. So four fertile brains sought to overcome it. No relative of the softer sex being available it was determined that one of the four should undergo sufficient outward transformation to satisfy the authorities. The charming gown was of white satin bespangled with sequins designed by Kate Reilly of Dover Street, the beautiful head of hair was done by Clarkson who came down himself to direct the final ‘touching up’. The group dined at Buol’s and taxied to the theatre. But what happened afterwards and how the ‘lady’ was smuggled into college we are not at liberty to divulge CDN 08 12 03 [8.29]

1909 02 26

Carrie Nation hoax – 09 02 26

1909 11 12

Bonfire night scenes – CWN 09 11 12

1909 11 19

One of the most successful undergraduate hoaxes ever perpetrated was carried out in the hall of Emmanuel College. Mr W.M. Malleson, a prominent member of the University Amateur Dramatic Club, disguised by a florid countenance with a grizzled grey moustache and beard impersonated Mr G. B. Haddock, the Liberal MP for North Lonsdale. He delivered a pithy address on Women's Suffrage. From first to last, despite the name of 'Haddock' there was no suspicion of 'cod' on the part of the audience who took the debate in real earnest CWN 09 11 19

1910

1910 03 11

A party of five undergraduates attempted to repeat the 'Merry Widow' hoax at the New Theatre but were sadly unsuccessful. It is a well-known rule that undergraduates may not purchase boxes unless accompanied by ladies or some elderly chaperone. A box was ordered in the name of the Hon Miss Neville of Magdalene College, which aroused suspicion. The party comprised three undergraduates and two 'ladies' who were very tall, walked with manly strides and spoke in a quaint high-pitched falsetto. Mr Redfern did not take many seconds to spot the disguise. 10 03 11f

1910 06 03

Mrs Pankhurst made her first acquaintance with the undergraduate at a meeting organised by the Cambridge University Men's League for Women's Suffrage at the Guildhall. She is used to lively meetings but usually there is some point to the interruptions to which she is subjected. This time the undergraduate section of the audience had come fully determined to turn the meeting into a sort of variety entertainment for their own delectation, and in this they succeeded. She stuck to her guns during her address which lasted, counting the interruptions, for about 70 minutes and then invited questions. About 9.30 a Proctor arrived and one man was led out of the hall, amidst much groaning. 10 06 03f & g

1910 06 24

The New Theatre being closed, the rowdy section of undergraduates have turned their attention to the Hippodrome, despite the fact that the house is 'out of bounds'. Last week some 40 or 50 attended nightly – of course without cap and gown – which made things generally uncomfortable. On Friday some beat time to the music on the backs of the musicians while others, spying some young ladies began, in full view of the audience, to make protestations of undying affection to them. Later they pelted artistes with bars of chocolate and lighted cigarette ends before the orchestra played 'God save the King' and the curtain was lowered to shrieks, whistling and shouting from the disappointed audience. 10 06 24e

1910 06 17

Saturday's bump suppers proved exceptionally popular. It is customary for bonfires to be held in college courts and the frequent discharge of fireworks kept the fun flowing until the early hours. Jesus, who retained their position as head of the river, held a magnificent bonfire on the Close. A large crowd attracted by an enormous pile of old boxes dumped near the tennis courts, assembled in anticipation of fun before the pile was set ablaze by firing Roman candles into the heart of the inflammable mass. 10 06 17

1910 06 17

One of the biggest mock funerals for many years resulted as a difference of opinion between the authorities of Emmanuel and several junior members of the college as to the proper conduct of a 'bump supper' after which they had lit a bonfire on the lawn in the front court. Some ten undergraduates in their third year were rusticated for a week. A string of hansom cabs appeared at the gates, the 'corpses' clambered on to the roofs and mourners in evening dress and wearing old silk hats swathed with crape accompanied them to the station. Includes members of CUOTC in uniform with rifles reversed - thought to be bad form so soon after King's funeral 10 06 17a

1910 11 11

An undergraduate was fined for assaulting a policeman on Guy Fawkes Night. A considerable amount of damage had been done, hoarding demolished, gas lamps broken, the railway station raided and milk churns overturned. The most serious incident occurred at Jesus Sluice footbridge where a battle royal took place between members of the County Constabulary and a large party of undergraduates and town roughs. They stoned the police, all of whom were hit, and PC Johnson was struck on the forehead by a piece of board and rendered unconscious. Only the arrival of police reinforcements had averted further trouble. 10 11 11 & a

1911 03 03

Locke-Lampson MP hoaxed by Horace de Vere Cole – 11 03 03d

1911 03 10

“Mock funeral” held when Trinity Hall undergraduate sent down for disciplinary offence, 100 horse & motor vehicles in procession with brass band on coal wagon leading. At the head of the funeral procession was a hansom. Seats on the top with legs dangling over the side, was the undertaker. His mournful calling seemed to have cast a settled gloom over his countenance. His eyes were mournful and sad, and his clothing was of the deepest black, save for his socks (he wore no shoes), which were of the brightest scarlet. In his hand he waved a long whip (an emblem of his mournful trade), with a bright handkerchief to match his wonderful socks tied to it. Behind the hearse were nine carriages filled with loudly lamenting mourners – extract from a report of a ‘Mock Funeral’ for an undergraduate sent down from university 11 03 10b [1.2,1.3,10.11]

1911 05

Undergraduates forbidden to take part in any musical or dramatic production outside University buildings; proctors booed by 300 undergraduates on way to University service [10.10]

1911 05 19

In a little side passage in King Street a barrel organ was draped with black and mauve as hansom, taxis and growlers arrived in their dozens. The coffin was covered with crepe surmounted by cap and gown while plumes barely concealed the lines of an express delivery van in which sat the ‘corpse’ smartly dressed in grey suit and felt bowler. There were about 100 horses and motor vehicles in the procession to the station where the tops of the railway carriages were filled with figures clad in varying garb from pyjamas and rowing shorts to mourning suits and dress suits. It was the most imposing mock funeral ever seen in Cambridge 11 05 19d & e

1911 06 02

When the Senior Proctor (Mr H.F. Stewart) accompanied by the Junior Proctor, Mr Joseph Barecroft) left St John’s College to attend the University service on Sunday afternoon, some 250 undergraduates fell in behind them. As the procession neared the church there was a considerable amount of ‘boooing’ and other noises apparently indicative of displeasure 11 06 02

1911 11 10

A motor car drove into Sawston with several undergraduates. They visited the Stores and bought women’s hats then commenced their fun by knocking people’s hats off in the street and replacing them with those they had bought. The lads next went to the Queen’s Head where they compelled the landlord to sit down while they drew the beer. They took pictures from the wall and placed them in the car – but the chauffeur took them back - then quite upset a cinematograph show, one hanging by his toes from a crossbar in the tent. It was a relief to the villagers when the motor left for Cambridge. 11 11 10e

1911 11 10

Undergraduate disrupt Saffron Walden fair, one received broken jaw from showman – 11 11 10e

1911 11 10

Serious ‘ragging’ took place in celebration of the 5th of November. A number of undergraduates carried ‘life-preservers’ and a violent assault made on the premises of Messrs Rattee and Kett where an employee was seriously injured. A mounted policeman was pulled from his horse and a police sergeant received a nasty cut over his eye. A member of the University was arrest for assault. But beyond the smashing of a number of street lamps little actual damage was done to property 11 11 10a & b

1912 03 08

A mock funeral started from the “corpse’s” lodging in Lensfield Road. There was a long line of taxis, hansoms and even four-wheelers stretching some distance down Trumpington Street. There was no elaborate “hearse” as in previous funerals: the body was placed quite simply in a hansom bearing the words “Alas! My poor brother” and smoked cigars throughout. His “cabby’s” hat was draped with crepe while the majority of the fancifully-dressed mourned wore complimentary black-eyes out of respect for the ‘deceased’. There were an extraordinary number of “flappers” – quite stunning flappers some of them were too. One of the best was a suffragette and Mrs Pankhurst also figured in the procession. 12 03 08

1912 03 15

Cambridge undergraduates formed a Strike Emergency Committee to avert the disaster with which the nation is threatened by the coal strike. The men were extremely enthusiastic and any reference to ‘getting the coal’ brought vociferous cheers. If they carried out their desire to work in the mines they would require protection: while half were underground the others should be on guard to see the cages and ventilation apparatus were not interfered with. Police would not be able to send help. Postcards were distributed on which students placed their names and addresses which would find them in the vacation if an emergency arose 12 03 15b & c

1912 03 15

Undergraduate plans to organise a strike emergency committee have been attacked by the ‘Cambridge Magazine’. It reports: “The strike-smashing Saturnalia of Mr Calderon and his Comic Coal Heavers, which began in Cambridge to the mingled disgust and amusement of King’s was continued on Friday night. We hope they will not take themselves seriously, and that their endeavours to make this ancient seat of learning ridiculous will soon cease

1912 11 08

It was one of the noisiest ‘rags’ seen for some years, for the introduction of a variety of bomb-firework, which gives a report louder than a rifle shot, more than compensated for the fewer Varsity men than usual. The liveliest scene occurred in King Street where the crowd were attracted by the sight of the hoarding outside the partly-demolished Hobson Street Chapel. Instead they turned their attention array of woodwork in connection with the building of the new Wesleyan Chapel near Christ’s Pieces, but this was strongly guarded by police. Another battle broke out in Grange Road where some 400 undergraduates damaged the fence around Mr Ebenezer Smith’s garden. 12 11 08a & b

1912 11 09

Varsity cads disrupt cinema [8.27]

1913 02 14

An unusual feature of the Mock Funeral (of an undergraduate ‘sent down’ from college) was a miniature coffin borne by a Chinaman. It was, like the ‘corpse’ completely hidden in the ‘hearse’, for the hansom was covered by men who seemed to cling to it as bees swarm on a tree. The procession was preceded by a two-seater car driven by an old fellow with a red beard and enormous straw hat sitting beside his ‘spouse’, a lady with a high complexion, a shawl alone betraying her age. The ‘cortege’ numbered nearly 50 vehicles including a ‘flapper’ riding a bicycle meant for three men. Her green hobble skirt was not as demurely worn as are the dresses of typical Cambridge girls. 13 02 14
p10 CIP

1913 11 07

‘Fifth’ celebrations, undergraduate rag and its police court sequel. 100 yards wooden fencing torn down Tenison Rd & bonfire made in GER yard Station Yard scene, mounted police charge, Homerton college attacked 13 11 07 p7 CIP

1913 11 14

An undergraduate told the court that he was a relative of the Khedive of Egypt and living at Shelford with a private tutor. He told his valet to get tickets for the New Theatre. But when refused admission he’d got involved in a struggle with an attendant and fell to the ground. The manager said he’d been drunk and had used bad language. But this was a serious matter from a moral point of view and would affect his career here and in his own country if upheld. He was convicted. 13 11 14 p10 CIP

1919 11 01

Proctors visit New Theatre for first time to correct undergraduate misbehaviour - stink bombs etc [5.11]

1919 11 12

“Fifth” fizzles at Cambridge. The stage was set on Wednesday evening for an old-time celebration of the 5th of November. Proctors, “bulldogs,” special constables, mounted police, mere “Roberts”, undergraduates, townspeople and schoolboys turned out to play their respective roles, but nothing happened. A few fire-works - cannons, crackers etc — were discharged on Market Hill but the proceedings were almost as tame as the original affair arranged by Mr. Guy Fawkes and a few of his fanatical friends 19 11 12 CIPof

1920

1920 02

In February 1920 Dr Glover was on duty as Proctor outside the Union, waiting for undergraduates offending against University regulations when one of the bulldogs, Lavis, stopped the Duke of York, later King George VI, who was seen smoking in academic dress. The prince’s equerry dashed over and said he could not have it, but Glover insisted. Next day he sent Lavis round with the usual fine notice when he met the Prince who gave him a drink. Some years later the King recalled the incident and referred to the cigarette as the most expensive one he ever smoked 53 04 25

1920 02 03

Union of Democratic Control attempted to hold ‘Bolshevik’ meeting but disrupted by undergraduates; senior proctor, T.R. Glover, hit by flour bomb; speaker Norman Angell rescued by police – Ch 20 02 03d

1920 03 02

Norman Angell, author of ‘The Great Illusion’ ragged – bitterly hostile reception; police could not stop undergraduates entering the windows - CDN 20 03 02

1920 03 03

Mock Funeral of Caius man, first for six years – a solitary conveyance does not give impression that there is much enthusiasm for this form of demonstration nowadays. – Ch 20 03 03d; photo – Ch 20 03 10a CDN 20 03 01

1920 03 10

From outbreak of war have been pacifists proclaiming against action taken against Germans who would have moved heaven and earth to bring war to early conclusion. They possess not a spark of British pluck ... led Cambridge gaining reputation as hotbed of Pacifism. University tried to stop this

vile work; now opposition to such pro-German propaganda and return of pacifist Bertrand Russell to Trinity. Should prohibit pacifist meetings – Ch 20 03 10d

1920 03 31

Recent 'Rag,'—A report will be presented to Cambridge Town Council tomorrow (Thursday) by the Watch Committee in respect to claims under the Riot (Damages) Act arising out of the recent "rag" in Cambridge. The Town Clerk reported to the Watch Committee that three claims had been received under the Riot (Damages) Act in respect of damage to the Castle Hotel amounting to £6.19s; Merton Hall amounting to £87 and St. Andrew's Hall, amounting to £14 11s. The Committee agreed that the claims in respect the Castle Hotel and At Andrew's Hall be admitted and included in the next list of bills, and that the consideration for the claim in respect of Merton House be deferred pending the receipt of a further report thereon from the Borough Surveyor. 20 03 31 CIPof

1920 06 23

Undergraduates in evening dress & degree robes exercise their right to play marbles on steps of Senate House (follows TT article) Ch 20 06 23a, photo 23d [3.15,12.22]

1920 11 06

Guy Fawkes rag, no serious damage but several arrests; raid on New Theatre and siege of police station

1920 11 12

Armistice 'Rag', chariot of flame on Market Hill, siege of Newnham College, burst through gates where for half hour of bliss ... few odd battalions of infuriated Dons and hysterical Newnhamites, police charge - CDN 20 11 12

1920 11 17

'Chariot of fire' rag – cab soaked in petrol – Ch 20 11 17e, f, repeated in 1921 when it collides with telephone kiosk

1921

Rags seemed to have reached climax after WWI, by 1920 "a new kind of misdirected energy, originality & daring is being poured into organising elaborate stunts, hoaxes & escapades; Michaelmas 1921 was great term for rags : Senate opened academic year by debating granting degrees for women; became political issue; first rag of burning gates of Newnham, then on voting day a colossal mock funeral for 'The death of the Varsity' with corpse of last male under-graduate being borne on a bier surrounded by aged mourners whose long grey beards dragged in dust; Armistice Day heralded by great Gun Day when German gun removed from Jesus college

1921 05 04

Cambridge University Pavement Club first meeting – undergraduate rag – 300 in Kings Parade; fried sausage and steak on Parker's Piece - photos – 21 05 04b, 21 05 11b

1921 06 15

Pavement Club – 500 on King's Parade with every form of locomotion known, journey to Girton – 21 06 15b

1921 10 26

University votes against women's degrees; undergraduate mock funeral – photos – 21 10 26b

1921 11 16

Jesus College large German gun trophy captured and transported to Caius College – 21 11 16d, 16e

1921 11 16

Armistice night rag, students assault police; heavy fines – 21 11 16f

1921 11 26

First Poppy Day collection made on 26 November passed smoothly (not done by undergrads); undergrads asked that this collection be organised entirely by their committee & take full responsibility that no incidents. Procession of 'animals' toured town with police escort, one of happiest rags ever seen' [38]

1922 03 04

On strolling along Kings-parade this morning we saw a crowd of undergraduates. Mingling therewith we became aware of the presence of a number of cyclists accoutred with hockey sticks. We divined then that a bicycle polo stunt was about to be "stunted". In short, it was a stupendous scheme schemed for the laudable purpose of brightening Cambridge. We waited a short time. Then cheers burst forth and the game (?) commenced. After wielding their weapons vigorously for about five minutes and hitting the "pill" (i.e. a spotless tennis ball), the players raised their battered and war-worn cycles aloft and to the accompaniment of cheers bore them tenderly to a place of safety. Motor 'buses, cycles and handcarts were enabled to get through the press by the help of the police. Ardour became somewhat damped until the ball was arrested by the police, when cheers once more broke forth, but the ball was remanded, and whence it flew we knew not. Thus ended the now customary end-of-term rag.

Although not what it might have been it was amusing, which is one point in its favour 22 03 04

1922 11 02

The performance of the musical comedy "My Nieces" at the New Theatre was delayed for ten minutes as the result of the unsportsmanlike behaviour of a number of undergraduates in the stalls. During one scene one of the young men threw a jumping cracker on the stage. The members of the company were startled and cries of indignation arose from all parts of the house. The manager had the curtain lowered and the stage cleared. The Proctor and "bulldogs" appeared on the scene, being received with the customary cheers. After a number of names had been taken a large party of undergraduates left the Theatre, their exit greeted with applause. Afterwards attendants found a number of crackers in the Theatre

1922 11 06

A lamp-boy, G.E.R. of Thoday street, Cambridge was summoned for throwing a firework on Senate House-hill on 4th inst. Fined 1s. Ten shillings was the fine imposed upon an undergraduate of Trinity College for a similar offence on Market-hill. Defendant said he did not know they were arresting people for letting fireworks off, or else he would not have been foot enough to do so in front of half the police force. An undergraduate of Corpus Christi who was fined 10s. stated that he came on to the square and saw a lot of police loafing about so he thought he would like to throw some fireworks 22 11 06

1922 11 13

If the Cambridge undergraduate can find any excuse for a "rag" he invariably organises a more or less elaborate affair. Yesterday's "circus" was a rag that everybody could enjoy; it did no harm to anybody and above all as a result of its labours aided Lord Haig's fund - "Poppy Day" - to the extent of £115 or thereabouts. The circus was a screamingly funny affair and brought everyone to doorways, windows and, in some cases, roof tops. The signal for the two minutes Armistice silence was heard in Downing-street and immediately the procession pulled up. The two minutes over pandemonium started as suddenly as it had ceased 22 11 13

1923 03

'Phineas' rag - Phineas, mascot seized – recalls Cambridge rag of March 1923 – 30 09 06a & b & photo – 30 09 06c

1923 11 06

Cambridge would be disappointed indeed if the Fifth of November failed to produce a rag of some sort. Last night's effort was, to say the least of it, feeble and was sustained for the most part by such

residents of the town as come out for excitement on such occasions, and a handful of very callow freshmen. Fireworks there were in plenty, but the old spirit was lacking. Had it not been for the mounted police and the proctors, the market square would have been its usual desolate self soon after 9.30 pm. It was noticeable that as soon as the mounted police left the crowd decreased by 50 per cent
23 11 06

1923 11 06

One hundred years ago the Royal and ancient game of rugby football was initiated, and today an alleged representation of the first game was given in Cambridge market square. Some time before noon the square was roped off and surrounded by police. The fountain was converted into a Royal box and the telephone kiosk into a press box. At noon the teams marched on to the ground. At their head was carried a large and considerably elongated football on a butchers tray. With the teams marched a portly and bearded Proctor, complete with "bullers" and a nasty looking birch, which he did not hesitate to use when occasion demanded

1923 11 10

The red poppy of Remembrance was everywhere in Cambridge today. Every buttonhole, every bicycle, and every motor car bore visible tribute to those who died that England might live. Everywhere were busy undergraduates smiling and pushing their business and selling red silk poppies in aid of the Earl Haig's Fund for ex-servicemen and their dependants. The average undergraduate loves to be "up and doing" and any way he can use his superfluous energy for a good cause appeals to him. In accordance with their usual custom the memorial at the General Post Office was decorated with a huge wreath of laurels and poppies 23 11 10

1923 11 10

A merry and light-hearted party of undergraduates, despite police vigilance, succeeded in obtaining their hearts desire - they manage to light a fire on market Hill. Certain of the undergraduate community attracted the attention of some constables to a gas lamp on the one corner of the square. They demonstrated a desire to figure on the charge sheet of the police court by the charmingly simple process of putting out the light. The police "fell for it" and kept watch on that particular part of the market place. Meanwhile another body of the faithful rushed on to the Market Hill with a rowing eight filled with petrol and had it alight before people realised what was towards 23 11 10

1923 11 12

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1923 11 19

The Cambridge undergraduates have once more been the source of innocent amusement. The "rag" consisted in the purchase of one of the old 4-wheeled tram cars that used in bygone days to be both a convenience and an adornment to the streets of Cambridge. On Saturday when it was expected that the tram would be towed in state through Cambridge streets the authorities were alarmed by the appearance of numbers undergraduates outside the yard where the tram was stored. At this moment another tram made its appearance, a tram of Lilliputian dimensions, towed with steady ropes by a happy band of undergraduates. The miniature car was solemnly dragged into the centre of town and along old tram lines, which have for many years or so useless a feature in King's Parade. 23 11 19

1924 11 06

The night of the 5th of November was clear and calm, and there was a bright moon to light the way of revellers – ideal conditions for a "rag". So evidently thought a large crowd of undergraduates and

townsmen that gathered on Cambridge Market Hill in hopes. Police stood around in little groups taking a giving chaff good humouredly with the crowd. Squibs and occasional small rockets broke the peace and were heralded by faint cheers and feminine shrieks if they happened to go off in the press. The first intimation of anything interesting was the sight of a small youth, pale and very troubled looking, marching up St Andrew's street, firmly held by a constabulary hand 24 11 06

1924 11 09

Cambridge undergraduates were busy today selling poppies. They were stationed in the centre of the town and in all the main thoroughfares leading thereto. Among their number were several very persistent in their efforts and "held-up" anybody – pedestrian, cyclist or motorist – who was not wearing a poppy. By way of pushing business a group of undergraduates hired a donkey and barrow, attired themselves as costers – complete with "pearlies" and other effects and went around the town rattling money boxes 24 11 09

1925 02 14

Celebrating the Lent Races gave gowns men the traditional excuse to break the bonds of conventional conduct and create some hectic scenes on Saturday night. From the viewpoint of roughness the 'rag' proved to be one of the worst during recent years, and the endeavours of the police to impose limitations on some of the more disorderly acts were not received with the good-natured co-operation which usually characterises such outbreaks. Besides having their helmet knocked off, several constables received nasty kicks about the legs and one was taken to Addenbrooke's Hospital with injuries to the head 25 02 14

1925 03 09

The bright idea was to unveil a 'statue' of Eros on Cambridge Market Hill, but they did not appear till quite three-quarters of an hour late. The crowd got tired of waiting and certain of their number pelted some adventurous spirits perched on the Market cross with oranges, and this little incident led to a general exchange of soft and 'squashy' fruit. Oranges gave place to tomatoes, which were followed by eggs and bags of flour. Besides being unpleasant, practice of this sort is dangerous 25 03 09

1925 11 06

Cambridge usually expects a 'rag' on Guy Fawkes' night but this year's affair was of a harmless character, plenty of noise being the chief characteristic. Fireworks galore were discharged and the Market Hill was occasionally lit up with flame-coloured flares. But this was rather a tame sort of amusement for undergraduates and they proceeded to accomplish the now stale feat of extinguishing the gas lamps in the neighbourhood of the Hill. Some undergrads took it into their heads to relight the lamps in the centre, which enabled one of their number to climb the fountain on the top of which something indistinguishable was placed. This being done out went the lamps again, coins being the smashing factor once more 25 11 06

1925 11 06

Two fires caused damage to the extent of thousands of pounds in Cambridge and both are believed to have been caused by fireworks. It was particularly unfortunate that one occurred a few moments after the other, for the second was a much bigger conflagration than the first, and the fire engine was not then available. The first was to a corn stack in Natal Road but the other was at Messrs Kidman & Sons' wood factory yard and workshops in Abbey Walk. The outbreak occurred at the end of the building nearest the Coldham's Common allotments, but it quickly spread along the rafters and within ten minutes there was no earthly chance of saving the building. The roof of St Columba's Mission Hall was soon alight and the outskirts of Simper's rope works also began to blaze 25 11 06

1925 11 09 c

Three undergraduates were fined £2 each for extinguishing street lamps. James Haynes, a watchman said he saw the gentlemen approach Drummer Street. They overturned the brazier containing his fire and he had to put the fire out because the tar on the pavement commenced to flare. He saw them turn

out the light of a lamp in Emmanuel Street. Two of them hoisted another up to do this. In Short Street they turned out three more lights and another five were turned out along Victoria Avenue.

1925 11 11

With commendable solemnity Cambridge honoured England's dead. Never before was the Two Minutes Silence so well observed in the busy parts of the town, a striking testimony to the increasing reverence which is attached to this impressive ceremony. Many wore their poppies as an outward sign of their remembrance and heads were reverently bared as the first maroon boomed forth from Parker's Piece. Except for a few instances of chronic forgetfulness or callous disregard the silence was complete

1925 11 14

"We the undersigned, convinced that all disputes between nations are capable of settlement by diplomatic negotiation, hereby solemnly declare that we shall refuse to support or render war service to any Government which resorts to arms". The declaration having been signed by members of the University they called a public meeting. The hall was nearly filled with undergraduates but a section of the audience showed their displeasure by continual interruption. Mr G.L. Trevelyan spoke of the horrors to be met in the next war, and was greeted with the remark: "No they will kill us nice and cleanly in the next war".

1926 05 03

Cambridge had a Mock Funeral today, after a lapse of many years. Undergraduates, dressed in outrageous attire, paraded the streets of the town and marched to the station to observe "funeral obsequies" to two Trinity men who have been sent down for a breach of college discipline. The procession made its way to the college to collect the "corpses". On arrival however they found their unfortunate colleagues had made use of their newly-acquired wings and flown, but nothing daunted the party proceeded to the station headed by a drum-major and a figure in clerical attire. Amongst the occupants of the horse-drawn 'hearse' were two musical geniuses with a banjo and saxophone 26 05 03

1926 11

"Scrum" rag one of wildest since war, 52 arrests, 100 in fines (11.26)

1926 11 11

For two minutes Cambridge stood still in silent homage to the glorious dead. Everywhere the Great Silence was religiously observed. As the hour approached a general atmosphere of expectancy enveloped the whole town until just before the great moment arrived a significant hush seemed to fall, and those in the street trod softly in fear unless they should disturb the slumbers of the sacred dead. As the bells of the Catholic church struck the hour a faint boom followed by a reverberating explosion from the direction of Parker's Piece announced that the fateful two minutes had arrived, and traffic and pedestrians came to a simultaneous standstill.

1927 02

Anti-feminist rag [3.18]

1927 02 25

"The first marriage according to the new Prayer Book" was solemnised in Cambridge when an undergraduate "bride" and "bridegroom" were joined together in unholy matrimony on King's Parade. The blushing bride with the bowing bridegroom was preceded by a piper and a clergyman who was wearing "flannel bags" under his surplice and carried a doll's sunshade. The bride's dress was a pair of white lace curtains and she carried a large bouquet of Brussels sprouts. The bridegroom wore a dilapidated silk hat and a red nose – and carried a banana. They stepped into a waiting carriage followed by a motley through of ludicrously attired "relations and friends" CDN 27 02 25

1927 06 09

Cambridge Undergraduates took upon themselves the duty of opening “Joanna Southcott’s” famous box on the Market Hill. A crowd of mammoth proportions assembled. A melancholy dirge was heard from Petty Cury and there appeared a party of pipers and following them in one of Dale’s lorries came a weird array of 24 “bishops” and a delegation of “Mormons” wearing huge straw sombreros. One “archbishop” proceeded to open the box, producing several layers of red tape, a teddy bear, a pair of old football boots and a number of bananas with which he pelted the crowd. The “rag” was organised to provide funds for the Cambridge Fruiting Campaign to help strawberry pickers in the Wisbech area. 27 06 09 [3.19]

1927 06 13

One of the largest crowds in memory witnessed the last of what may go down in history as the “Microphone Mays”. Both banks of the Cam at Ditton presented the spectacle of an unbroken line of sightseers. There were three men up a tree at Ditton Paddock; they and their friend the microphone were telling all England what was happening and theirs was truly a romance of the tree tops. One wonders how many old Cambridge men were listening-in to a drama in which they once played a part. 27 06 13

1927 06 15

Three well-known Cambridge sportsmen who have completed their academic careers distinguished themselves by spending part of the night in the grounds of one of the women’s colleges and part in another. At midnight on Saturday they climbed into Newnham, taking with them a tent which they pitched in full view and were not discovered until they were all snug in “bed”, when they commenced community singing. Newnham Dons became alarmed and phoned for the police, who turned them out. They then motored to Girton, scaled a twelve-foot wall and pitched the tent. They were not discovered until the early hours of the morning when the earliest risers amongst the lady students saw the strange sight in the middle of the court. 27 06 15

1927 11 11

Poppies! They were everywhere. The streets of Cambridge were ablaze with them. They were on every coat, in every conscience. Their spirit turned the town into a red riot of remembrance. As the day wore on the poppies grew thicker. A great army of 2,000 undergraduates sold the emblems with an enthusiasm which was unbounded. Early in the morning they were at their posts with their trays of flowers and collecting boxes and all through the day carried on their merry money hunt. Many played the role of highwaymen, boarding buses and holding up the traffic.

1928 11 10

Soon after daybreak the advance guard of the thousand undergraduate poppy sellers sallied forth to all quarters of Cambridge, determined to beat the record figures reached last year. The warmth of their enthusiasm was sufficient protection against the keen frosty air, and scorning overcoats they patrolled the lonely streets and waylaid those hurrying to business. They were so cheerfully importunate that only a modern Scrooge could have refused them and most people seemed only too willing to pay off another small instalment of their war debt.

1928 11 10 c

Carnival conditions prevailed in Cambridge where the poppy-decked shoppers met amusing spectacles on all hands. On no previous poppy day has undergraduate ingenuity been so fertile. Chief among the many attractive schemes for money squeezing was “Banger’s Circus” in which an unidentifiable animal with ‘flannel bag’ legs, and a monkey led on a chain by a top-hatted ringmaster were noticeable. The procession was disorganised when the monkey developed a thirst and dashed into the Angel, dragging the not-unwilling circus master with him

1929 03 13

The University Proctors have considered regulations for students who desire to use aircraft during term time. Undergraduates flying their own or civilian aircraft may lead to annoyance from low flying and accidents. A Light Aeroplane Club has already been formed which gives facilities for flying

within a few miles of the University. Now no student may fly as pilot or passenger during term time without written permission from his parents and tutor. Those offending will be liable to be punished by suspension, rustication, expulsion or otherwise. 29 03 13

1929 03 15

A Cambridge undergraduate was fined for an assault on a taxicab driver who attempted to push him off the running-board of a stationary cab. It took place after a bump supper when he was in a very excited condition. Robert Osborne said he went to the ADC Theatre and left his cab on the rank on Jesus Lane. The undergrad and others came along the road and turned the starting handle of the taxis. He jumped on his running-board and would not get off, so he pushed him off. The lad then hit him several times. 29 03 15

1929 11 06

Nearly thirty arrests were made during a Guy Fawkes 'Rag' on Cambridge Market Hill. Early in the evening an attempt was made to light a bonfire in Petty Cury and there was a considerable blaze in front of Falcon Yard before the police noticed it and it was extinguished. In Rose Crescent an effigy was soaked with petrol, stuffed with fireworks and deposited near the Market Hill end. This was quickly extinguished and the effigy confiscated, but the petrol continued to burn for a long time afterwards. A new feature of the scrimmages was the use of police whistles by undergraduates which added to the confusion. 29 11 06

1929 11 07

A sheep farmer, who became annoyed on Guy Fawkes Night at being mistaken for an undergraduate, was summonsed for assaulting the Senior Proctor, Mr Frederick Dykes. He testified that he had been with his constables when he sent one after an undergraduate who attempted to evade him. He then heard a shout of 'Get the Proctor' and felt two blows on his head. One of his constables seized the man now in the dock. Defendant said he was a stranger to Cambridge and had been told that if he followed the proctors round he would see some fun. He was not dressed like an undergraduate. He was fined £3. 29 11 07

1930

1930 02 26

A woman was summoned for allowing a barn at Fen Ditton to be used for immoral purposes. She had converted it into a dance hall, teas were advertised and dances held. Det-Sergt Willis said he looked through the window and observed people inside. Some of the women attending were known to be of an undesirable character and the men mostly members of the University. The girls were dancing by themselves down the centre of the room holding up their dresses; another girl got on top of the piano and danced. Couples frequently left and went to a nearby cottage. Later the University Proctor arrived; he went to the dance room which was in darkness and by the light of his lamp could see four undergraduates and seven girls. They said they were telling ghost stories. 30 02 26a-d

1930 05 26

A mock funeral procession paraded through Cambridge as undergraduates bade farewell to one of their number who had been sent down. It was headed by an old horse-drawn landau in which the 'corpse' sat, his face disguised beneath a war-paint of lipstick. He was joined by various persons who were to officiate at the ceremony; beneath top hats, black cloches and wideawakes were suits of grey flannel, blazers and plus-fours. All were garnished in crepe streamers on which hung rhubarb, beer and wine bottles, remains of the 'wake'. At the station the funereal party moved along the platform hilariously singing a dirge and the 'corpse' was installed in a third-class compartment where gifts of fruit and rhubarb were handed solemnly in. 30 05 26

1930 11 06

Cambridge police had cold feet with waiting for something to turn up in a temperature several degrees under freezing point. But the dreaded 'Fifth', that traditional battle between University and police failed to explode in the time-honoured fashion. There was a constant bombardment on the outskirts of

town and some spasmodic firework throwing on the market where smoke screens were used to some effect. Using the cloud as cover two lamps were extinguished under the very nose of a sergeant. There were a few arrests but no helmets were knocked off. 30 11 06b

1930 11 11

Poppy Day rag – 30 11 11e-g

1931

First meeting Cambridge Socialist Society ‘solid band of presumably Tory undergraduates at back of hall began to shout, heckle & sing patriotic songs’, police called, threw stink bombs [45]

1931 02 27

Over 100 attended a funeral service for a young Freshman whose mysterious death has caused such a sensation throughout the country. Press and public were excluded but a crowd gathered and police had some difficulty in controlling the traffic. He had been found lying dead on the floor of his room, gagged and bound in an elaborate manner with numerous handkerchiefs, a length of puttee, and a wire flex. Members of the Pentacle Club, the University Magicians’ Society have been interrogated & Sir Bernard Spilsbury, the famous Home Office pathologist has been called in. 31 02 27d-g-h

1931 06 12

A Cambridge motor firm – W.E. Harding of Seven Sisters garage, Newmarket Road – has been barred from trading with undergraduates by the Vice Chancellor. Under university rules tradesmen must notify tutors by the end of term of any debt exceeding £5 incurred by an undergraduate. But Mr Harding had not been told this. Only two other such notices have appeared within living memory. Now any student having any dealings with the firm may be suspended or rusticated. 31 06 12b

1931 07 17

An undergraduate rag in celebration of examination success let to two young army officers appearing in court charged with the theft of coloured lenses and other fittings belonging to traffic lights on the corner of Lensfield Road. They were of no conceivable value except as a trophy. One was the son of a distinguished soldier in the Coldstream Guards killed at Arras during the war. If convicted it would have a grave effect on his army career. The case was dismissed. 31 07 17b & c

1931 11 13

The Poppy Day collection in Cambridge has again smashed all records with undergraduate collectors struggling with money still coming in. Nearly two tons of coppers have passed through their hands. Early in the day the stock of poppies was exhausted and a fresh supply had to be brought in by train. Market Hill was the scene of half-a-dozen well organised ‘rags’ and at Silver Street the Demon Diver jumped in flames into the river and the collectors drew in good sums for his ‘widow’ and ‘children’ 31 11 13 I & j

1932 05 18

Overnight two unfurled umbrellas were securely tied to the pinnacles of King’s College chapel so they stood straight up. The college called a window cleaner to remove them, but despite his long ladder he was unable to get within ten feet. Two undergraduates went on the roof with shotguns and endeavoured to shoot them down. One fell but the other proved more difficult. The shots knocked the handle sideways. For some hours it floated gracefully from side to side in the wind like some gigantic weathercock. 32 05 18

1932 05 21

What would papers do without Cambridge undergraduates’ pranks? During a hard frost years ago some 150 callow youths had a ‘curling’ bonspiel on the pond at Emmanuel College. Each had a china bowl in lieu of the orthodox curling stone – and each bowl contained a lighted candle. Overnight a thaw set in and visitors watched gardeners salvaging the ‘curling stones’ from the bottom of the pond. Shortly afterwards undergraduates took a donkey dressed in cap and gown into dinner in hall. Most of

the aged dons mistook him for one of themselves! But in those days no newspaper commented. 32 05
21a

1932 05 21

The inner history of the King's College roof-climbing escapade has been revealed. The hazardous feat was carried out by two parties of undergraduates, including several well-known athletes, who are members of a secret organisation composed of skilled mountain climbers. They used the lightning conductor which has been loosened by previous generations of climbers. It is the climax of a series of climbs during the past few months; now they proposed to publish detailed accounts of their exploits
32 05 21

1932 05 24

Night-climbers Kings chapel & Eton – 32 05 24

1932 06 01

The 'Brighter Roofs for Colleges' movement is growing. Overnight at Ridley Hall two cords were stretched from one of the college towers. On them pyjamas, pyjamas and still more pyjamas were floating in the wind. Large ones, small ones, brightly-coloured and silk examples were proudly swaying in the breeze and in the middle was suspended a parson's hat. After they had been lowered to the ground their various owners joined in a frantic scramble for their particular pairs which had been removed from their rooms. 32 06 01a

1932 06 02

King's nightclimbing – brolly removed – 32 06 02

1932 06 06

Nightclimbing craze spreads to Emmanuel – 32 06 06d

1933 06 13

The roof-climber who 'pinched' the two weathervanes off the Squire Law Library building seems to have had an attack of conscience, for the missing cock and fish were replaced last night. But they also left tasteful decorations and souvenirs in the shape of two sherry bottles at each end of an arch high over the entrance to the Geological Museum. They are said to be full and so act as 'bait' to other scalers of walls and roofs. 33 06 13

1933 11 06

Bonfire night demonstration & Hitler Nazi meeting – 33 11 06

1933 11 10

The film 'Our Fighting Navy' has been withdrawn from the Tivoli Cinema following lively scenes. Fifty members of the Students' Anti-War went to make a protest but a rival party, numbering about a thousand undergraduates, marched to the cinema with two bands playing war-time songs and carrying Union Jacks. Several tried to push their way in until the arrival of four policemen who, with drawn truncheons, managed to keep the crowd at bay whilst a dozen more raced to the scene in motor vehicles. Cries of 'Down with Hitler' and 'Hail Hitler' were heard above the general uproar and a stink bomb let off in the vestibule. 33 11 10

1931 11 13

The Poppy Day collection in Cambridge has again smashed all records with undergraduate collectors struggling with money still coming in. Nearly two tons of coppers have passed through their hands. Early in the day the stock of poppies was exhausted and a fresh supply had to be brought in by train. Market Hill was the scene of half-a-dozen well organised 'rags' and at Silver Street the Demon Diver jumped in flames into the river and the collectors drew in good sums for his 'widow' and 'children'
31 11 13 I & j

1934 02 22

Trinity College was the venue of a carefully-planned 'rag' involving a large number of fireworks. The roof was chosen as the main display ground. The first rocket went up and landed in Neville's court before all sorts of fireworks went off in rapid succession, including a couple on the two turrets of the Great Gate. Next day porters were trying to identify the owner of a walking stick on which a Catharine wheel had been fixed. 34 02 22

1934 03 03

Sir Stafford Cripps addressed a meeting on 'The Necessity for Socialism' at Cambridge Central School. The hall was packed to capacity with townspeople and undergraduates and he was greeted with mingled cheers, boos and hisses. His speech was interrupted on several occasions and twenty undergraduates opposed to his views waited for him at the school gates afterwards. But the proctor and his bulldogs arrived in time and he was driven away without any demonstration being possible. 34 03 03

1934 03 05

A Cambridge police constable was injured during the 'rag' which followed the inter-college rugby cup final between Clare and St Catharine's. At Burrell's Walk undergraduates used wooden palisades to make a bonfire. The fire engine was called out but was surrounded by a crowd of students some of whom pulled the hose off the drum. Others clambered on to the engine and took the front and side lamps off. The fire was put out by college porters. In Queen's Road the police were forced to defend themselves. Truncheons were used to prevent their helmets being snatched off. There was some hard fighting. A number of street lamps were broken and a window was smashed in King's Parade. Two undergraduates were arrested, charged with assaulting the police 34 03 05

1934 04 30

A former undergraduate appeared in court following a scuffle. Vincent Brock, a university bulldog, said he'd accompanied the Proctor, Rev Heywood, into the bar of the Theatre Cinema where there were many undergraduates during the interval. There was much shouting and excitement. The accused had then assaulted him by tipping his top hat over his face. 34 04 30

1934 11 06

Cambridge saw one of the most riotous celebrations of the 'Fifth' for many years. In the course of demonstrations around Market Hill nearly 40 arrests were made, many of the police lost their helmets, several more had their tunics ripped right down the back and not a few sustained split knuckles and bruises. When supplies of fireworks began to run low parties of undergraduates attempted to put out every light but carried their efforts too far and smashed the glass of two shop windows and the traffic signal at the top of Petty Cury. There were 35 defendants including seven for assaults on the police, three for resisting the police a number for obstructing the police. Other summonses were for extinguishing street lamps and throwing fireworks. A Trinity undergraduate was fined for 'tipping' a policeman's helmet. Several times during the hearing there were outbursts of laughter. 36 11 06, 34 11 06a & b [1.1]

1934 11 10

Poppy Day collectors had to contend with a dismal downpour of rain. But a large crowd gathered on Senate House Hill to await the arrival of a self-styled 'Hitler' who was due to open the Caius Fun Fair. When he did come, by car, he brought a procession of about a dozen cars in his wake, all containing weird and wonderful characters. The obstinate mule, which last year lay down in the road and refused to get up until tempted by a coin, was less obstinate on the present occasion, for the wet and muddy road was hardly a pleasant bed. 34 11 10 & a

1935 03 07

Police guarded the closed gates of the University Arms Hotel while Sir Oswald Mosley was at a dinner organised by the University Fascist Society. Outside a meeting organised by the University Socialist Society was held on Parker's Piece with speeches by John Cornford, Maurice Cornford and

Maurice Dobb. Then a torchlight procession by 200 undergraduates shouting anti-Fascist slogans such as 'We want Mosley dead or alive' and singing 'The Internationale' marched to Peas Hill where more speeches were made before a Proctor arrived and they dispersed. 35 03 07c

1935 03 27

University authorities are seeking to control the giving of large sherry and cocktail parties in undergraduates' rooms. Now a host wishing to give a party for more than 15 people will have to obtain permission from his tutor and the Junior Proctor. Parties of more than five members of the university held in any tavern or public room also need written permission or the owner will be liable to be discommuned. Another change bans garages from supplying motor cars to undergraduates on hire purchase without the tutor's approval. 35 03 27

1935 08 03

Tops removed from new Belisha Beacons after Bumps supper [1.20]

1935 11 06

Guy Fawkes – traditional rag, few arrests – 35 11 06b

1936 03 04

Sultan of Zanzibar hoax – photo – at reported death Horace Cole - 36 03 04

1936 03 14

Undergraduates last night hazardously climbed to the roof of Emmanuel College North Court and decorated six chimneys with chamber pots. They were removed by Mr S. Burgess of Messrs Prime's the builders who is often called in to remove various objects placed in inaccessible positions by exuberant undergraduates. "Some of them can run up brick walls", he said: one took off his shoes and went down a wall by means of his feet and hands alone to remove a gown that had been placed in a particularly difficult spot. 36 03 14

1936 05 05

Undergraduates, tired of their boring existence at the University, found a new way of letting off their spirits. A party 'invaded' the fair on Midsummer Common and obtained permission from the proprietor of the Wall of Death to give a display. Two mounted on motor cycles and the others on bicycles then gave a short show with plenty of impromptu thrills and spills. Fortunately no proctors appeared on the scene. 36 05 05a

1936 11 06

Guy Fawkes Night disorder, truncheon charges, riotous scenes – court case – 36 11 06

1936 11 07

Horace Cole and origins of Dreadnought hoax – 36 11 07c

1937 11 06

The treat of severe action had a salutary effect on Cambridge undergraduates during the 'Fifth' celebrations. Last year a number of students were rusticated and others heavily fined by Borough justices. The Gas Company surrounded their lamp posts with barbed wire and fitted specially toughened glass over the actual light. Although a number of the taller standards were clambered up in every case the mountaineers had to return baffled. Not a light was extinguished. However two bus windows were broken with bricks and a pane of glass in a telephone kiosk was smashed. Photographers who used flashlights to take pictures had to retire in face of a barrage of missiles. Police arrested a woman but no serious attempt was made to rescue her. 37 11 06

1938 11 11

Undergraduates invaded the streets, skilfully extracting all the spare coppers with various ingenious stunts. In white sweaters and kilts of many clans the University Pipe Band paraded to Market Square

for a display of Highland dancing, then toured public houses. The 'Peace Group' were perched on a cart disguised as a camouflaged tank decorated with "Atlee's pants" – which appeared to be pale pink in colour. Standing on the tank were two dictatorial-looking figures in uniform. Amongst the individual performers was a man on a pair of stilts made from sculls while barrel-organ players were dressed as ghosts 38 11 11

1939 05 20

Cambridge Corn Exchange was packed with 2,500 undergraduates when Winston Churchill made a striking speech on conscription which was relayed to the Lion Hotel. There was some violence when those unable to get in attempted to force an entrance; during the melee a policeman lost his helmet. Several hundred undergraduates remained outside until a proctor ordered them to disperse. Inside a motion accepting conscription was carried by ten to one 39 05 20 & a

1939 11 01

Rev E.M. Tweed was at The Perse 1884-87 under Rev John Wisken; played in football team; then to St Catharine's and 'coached' while undergraduate. Guy Fawkes day memories & proctors 39 11 01

1939 11 11

Set against the tragic background of a new war, Poppy Day in Cambridge presented a much more subdued scene. The war-wrought necessity of avoiding large gatherings of crowds and the blocking of streets considerably curtailed the undergraduates' carnival-light activity. Decorated vehicles had been banned. The German Chancellor was the favourite target for shafts of wit and the Cosmopolitan Cinema advertising vehicles offered an invitation to 'Beat up Hitler' by piercing a pip with a dart. 39 11 11a

1939 12 01

Poppy Day total is now £2,328 14s. The exceptional circumstances last year produced a sum of about £2,819, but the 1939 total is already near the £2,382 collected in 1937 and the £2,452 collected in 1936. Pembroke heads the list of individual college collections with a sum of £223 - £80 more than the runner-up, Christ's. 39 12 01 CIP0f

1939 12 01

Scores of undergraduates interrupted a rally organised by the University branch of the Communist Party. Despite the provision of loudspeakers the uproar made it impossible for the Press to hear the speeches. Two fights started in the gallery and there was an attempted raid on the red flag on the platform. The Chief Constable went to the scene. The appearance of two proctors and their 'bulldogs' was a quietening influence. Their coming was the signal for a general donning of gowns by stewards who had removed them in order to carry out more easily their work as 'chuckers out' 39 12 01c

1940

1942 09 17

Punts and canoes placed on NFS reservoir on lawn in front of King's – photo – 42 09 17a

1944 11 08

Bonfire Night rag protests – 44 11 08 & a, b

1944 11 11

November 5th falls on Sunday, plans for Rag opposed [1.9]

1945 11 06

First peacetime 'Fifth' rag, street lights extinguished, attack on 'Bull', Regal stormed – CDN 1945 11 06

1947 11 06

Six undergraduates and two RAF men were arrested during the usual Guy Fawkes Night scenes in the centre of Cambridge last night. From 7.30 crowds grew steadily on Market Hill. Fireworks were discharged freely and the din reached its peak between eight and half-past. Members of the University who earlier had been outnumbered by more than ten to one were in force by nine o'clock, several minor scuffles occurred about this time, and the first of several policemen's helmets disappeared. Proctors and their "bulldogs" early kept undergraduates on the move. After that the crowd gradually thinned away, and by 1.15 there were only groups here and there

47 11 06

Poppy Day rag, p5

1948 11 06

Cambridge's annual Guy Fawke's battle was waged in the market square and surrounding streets. Five undergraduates were amongst those who were arrested and placed in the Guildhall cells until being bailed. There were three charges of assaulting the police. Though a strong warning had been given by the university authorities there was considerable rowdyism. RAF men from nearby airfields and US service personnel were banned from Cambridge for the night. Ten people were taken to Addenbrooke's hospital having received slight injuries or fainted in the large crowds

48 11 06

Hand grenade thrown at Senate House on November 5th, damages glass [2.16,1.11]

1948 11 17

Soon the sight of women students in their gowns and proceeding to degrees alongside the men, will become common place, and no one will give them a second thought. It is the "first time" however, which makes news and even the occasion of the first woman to be "progged" becomes a minor act of University history. Members of the colleges had awaited with interest to see on whom this "honour" would befall. Their curiosity was satisfied within three weeks of the beginning of term. The "honour" – said to have been coveted by a number of women students, who tried to attract the attention of the proctor – fell to a third-year anthropology student of Girton, Miss Valida Turner, who was fined for not wearing her gown after dark

1948 12 16

Captain C.R. Benstead, senior proctor of the University, spoke of the lighter side of proctoring. He said; "How do we know a Girton or Newnham girl when we see one in the dark without a gown? One night we espied a girl of transcending beauty wheeling a very academic-looking bicycle. We picked her up – in the proctorial sense! – only to discover later that she was a bus conductress!"

1949 11 07

The quietest Guy Fawkes night "rag" long-service Cambridge police officers can remember passed off without even a street lamp being extinguished – another "within living memory" record. A crowd gathered on the Market Square by 7pm and fireworks were thrown. A police car which arrived on the scene radioed for reinforcements. These shepherded the crowd off the square. After that police posted at the entrances to the square prevented people entering the area. Early in the evening a few rotten eggs were thrown, and a smoke bomb exploded in the Sidney Street area. These incidents, and the intermittent throwing of fireworks, constituted about the only "excitement" of the evening, though there was an occasion when a "bulldog" pursued a man at full speed in front of the Guildhall

49 11 07

1950

1950 11 06

Although four arrests – three townsmen and one undergraduate – were made, Guy Fawkes night this year was about the quietest since the war. Undergraduates were not as lively as in years past. The reason for the lack of activity on their part was probably the fact that they had been warned verbally

by their tutors. Just to make sure seven watchful Proctors with their top-hatted ‘bulldogs’ maintained a constant patrol of the main streets 50 11 06

1950 11 11

In the main streets of Cambridge today it looked as though a zoo, a circus, a host of foreign invaders and history’s immortals had been let loose – not to mention members of species hitherto unknown. It was the Poppy Day pantomime again and students were ‘on the make’. Poppy sellers were on the street and some 70,000 poppies were on sale. The Mayor, Ald Taylor, was kidnapped, his hands bound with a scarf and marched out of the Guildhall into a Rolls Royce while police thoughtfully held back the crowds 50 11 11

1951 11 10

Undergraduate collectors set out to break all previous Poppy Day collection records. The “ban” on well-known Middle East personalities made no difference to the high degree of ingenuity shown in extracting money from an ever-willing public. A seductive harem scene on a lorry featured “the Proctor” smoking surely nothing less potent than hashish while on the Magdalene college lorry a European “twist” was given by a “Don” reclining on cushions smoking a “hookah”. A collection of the weirdest Oriental gentlemen ever preceded the lorry with collecting boxes 51 11 10

1954 11 06

Police helmets will be treasured possession in the homes of undergraduates and Cambridge ‘Teddy-Boys’ who contributed to the Guy Fawkes Night high jinks. One police constable, helmet-less, went back to base for another. But in double-quick time this went too! Frequent clashes broke out between police and revellers. In Market Square a crowd of more than 5,000 screamed, shouted, pushed and laughed but it was ‘good natured fooling’. “Teddy” girls screamed at each bang, unsuspecting undergraduates were pounced on by Proctors and ‘Bulldogs’ and there were boos and hisses each time an untidy-looking urchin was led away, and each time the urchin would protest his innocence of throwing any fireworks.

1955 05 12

A gaping hole, nine feet in circumference and about a foot deep, was blown in the path beside Trinity College bridge last night. It is believed that a stick of dynamite was used as a student said he heard a terrific explosion and the building shook. The explosion caused leaves to be blown off trees nearby. This is the third time within a year that a deep pit has appeared near the bridge and last week it was decorated with planks and trowels. But two porters and a gardener denied all knowledge and the college spokesman had nothing to say. 55 05 12a [1.22]

1956 11 05

A Suez protest rally was held on Parker’s Piece. The back of a lorry provided a speakers’ platform and round it was ringed an audience of some 1,500 people who attempted to listen to the arguments through the constant hubbub of a group of dissenting undergraduates. They carried slogans tacked on long-handled brushes saying ‘Eden acts where U.N.O. fails’ and ‘Non-intervention is Suez-cide’. Scuffles broke out and a lone firework was lobbed on to the platform. 56 11 05a
Smoke bombs, water from upstairs windows and counter-cries from undergraduates accompanied the “Stop Eden’s War” procession organised by Cambridge Labour Party. Eighty people carrying placards set off from the Alex Wood Memorial Hall but were joined by a second, less orderly procession of undergraduates shouting “Eden Must Stay” to counter the Labour cries of “Eden Must Go”. 56 11 05b

1957 05 24

The Night Climbers of Cambridge are at it again. At daybreak two objects had been placed on the spires of King’s college chapel. One is the globe of a Belisha beacon, the other a nylon stocking. There was a turret-climbing episode in May 1932 on the eve of Empire Day when a Union Jack was flying from the north-east turret. Two nights previously the pinnacles were decorated with open umbrellas 57 05 24

1957 06 15

Cambridge Night Climbers spend the small hours of the night among the college piers and pinnacles. They work in groups of two or three and their equipment is a pair of soft shoes and gloves with sometimes a punt cushion for crossing the spikes and broken glass set in concrete. They climb for the love of climbing and regard the leaving of flags or underclothes as an error of taste bordering on exhibitionism. 57 06 15c

1957 11 09

Poppy Day photos, p5 & p8

1958 05 29

“The Freshman”, a light-hearted film about life at Cambridge University, will bring in all the well-known local angles – the May Races and balls, chases by Proctors and their ‘Bulldogs’, visits to coffee bars – and of course, a local romance. It will star Hardy Kruger and Sylvia Syms. But they have had a mishap. While a motoring scene was being shot along Trumpington Road the crankshaft of a vintage 1927 Bentley car suddenly snapped. Now mechanics are searching for a spare, or a new car! 58 05 29a, 58 05 28

1958 06 09

A unique answer to the Cambridge traffic problems was found during the weekend. Somebody, obvious with an acute parking problem, decided that all the flat space on top of the Senate House was going to waste – so they decided to park an Austin 7 van there! Early-morning passers-by goggled and stared in amazement at the strange sight of hefty firemen and policemen struggling to make the van safe from the wind. Nobody seems to know who put it there. The big problem is: how to get it down. 58 06 09a

1958 06 11

Hundreds of students watched – and offered advice – as Civil Defence volunteers tried to remove the Austin 7 van from the roof of the Senate House. It was moved on to the parapet, but it would not pass between the legs of a derrick. Men hammered at its jutting corners and thudded upon its protrusions before deciding that it must come down in pieces. A good deal of parts were lowered on a pulley and stored in a rescue vehicle. Then they drove away. Despite the real courage of the Civil Defence men, the day went well for undergraduate Cambridge. 58 06 11 & a

1958 06 12

Civil Defence men have succeeded in bringing down the van from the Senate House roof. It was cut in half with the aid of an oxy-acetylene torch, then cut up again, and again, until all the parts were of a suitable size to be lowered, starting with the bonnet and wings, then the radiator and steering column. Part of the roof and a side were the last down. The proceedings were watched by the Vice-Chancellor of the University and two or three students who climbed on the roof of the Old Schools building and offered suggestions as to how it should be dismantled. 58 06 12a

1958 11 03

Gown & Teddy Boys, about 60 taunt proctors [21.7]

1958 11 08

Many householders opened their doors early to a young man in pyjamas or an undergraduate turbaned like a caliph and bought a poppy, then poured into Cambridge to see the fun. Every entrance was barricaded, every vehicle stopped, and toll demanded. Progress was difficult in one street because Mr John Day of Trinity was having breakfast with Miss Alexandra Hearnshaw, a Newnham mathematician, on a Belisha crossing. In Petty Cury two rival dragons occupied most of the road – a dinosaur quite 70 feet long and containing numberless undergraduates of whom only the feet were visible and a toothy monster centipede writhing from the direction of the Senate House. 58 11 08

1959 04 03

University Proctors generally visit dance halls in Cambridge, they could (but rarely did) visit the licensed houses and never visited private houses unless invited. One of the routine duties was the "walking at night". It was their job to see that undergraduates were prevented from annoying citizens, which was more important than fining them for not wearing gowns. There was very close cooperation with the police as proctors had a greater variety of more suitable punishments; students could be rusticated, gated or fined or even have their university driving licenses withdrawn, Dr E.R. Lapwood told businessmen. 59 04 03

1959 11 06

Roughest November 5th for 20 years, banger battles on Market Hill, £200 damage caused (6.11.59)
59 11 06g

1959 11 07

Harlequins and Columbines, spacemen and fishermen, artists, engine drivers, unmarried 'Mummies' (Egyptian variety), balloon vendors, winged wonders, hot dog sellers, ghouls and luscious lovelies, all filled the streets of Cambridge to collect money for the Earl Haig Fund. The City was crammed with floats, blasted with instruments and its pedestrians and traffic forced to pay tolls before being allowed to pass. One of the most sombre 'floats' was that lamenting the Labour Party's third consecutive defeat at the polls. Another proclaimed "Life's better under the Conservatives" 59 11 07 & aa

1960

1960 10 18

The Vice Chancellor has banned all undergraduates from taking part in Guy Fawkes Night celebrations in the city centre. In recent years November 5th had been marked by particularly destructive and violent acts, including the use of home-made fireworks, which have caused painful injuries to innocent bystanders. Although students have played only a minor part at the occasions the University are under an obligation to help the city authorities check such disorderly conduct. Now Market Hill and the surrounding area will be out of bounds to members of the University 'in statu pupillari' between 7 pm and midnight 60 10 18 (200 police patrol, no trouble)

1961 10 31

Undergraduates have been banned from the centre of Cambridge on Guy Fawkes Day. This will enable police to control the danger from homemade fireworks which have caused injuries to innocent bystanders A similar ban last year made it the quietest for many years 61 10 31

1961 11 10

Traffic was brought to an almost complete standstill in Cambridge as the Poppy Day Rag got under way and the streets became blocked with floats. Altogether 4,000 students with dustbin lids, tin cans and saucepans collected for the Earl Haig Fund. Dr Kildare performed 'bloody operations' on the streets, Trinity Hall undergraduates shaved Belisha beacons, girls from Girton dressed as blackbirds 'plucked ready for cooking' did hectic business while the 'new Hally Orchestra' gave a command performance with bicycle chains on dustbin lids and old mangles. Pedestrians found it hard to resist a forlorn and bedraggled donkey with an equally forlorn undergraduate clutching a box of soggy poppies. 61 11 10b

1961 11 17

Buckets of water cascaded over undergraduates who marched along King's Parade as a protest against having to wear gowns. About 250, many without gowns, walked four abreast to the Senate House escorted by a solitary policeman. Other students chanted 'Keep the Gown'. When they reached Senate House Hill three Proctors accompanied by two Bulldogs took down some of the names – they are liable to a fine of six shillings and eightpence. The only 'casualty' was a Bulldog who had his top hat snatched by an undergraduate who ran off in Trinity Street 61 11 17b

1962 10 16

A 'mock funeral' was held for two undergraduates, Philip Gurden of Magdalene and Simon Keswick of Trinity, who were sent down for failing their exams. Their 'coffin' was carried on a sports car while in the 'cortege' at the rear was Prince William of Gloucester who is at Magdalene College 62 10 16 [446.9.6]

1962 10 24

A crowd of 5,000 people, mainly students, swarmed through Cambridge after police and Proctors stopped a political protest rally about the American-Cuban crisis on the Market Square. Carrying placards declaring 'Hands Off Cuba' they made their way to Parker's Piece where the meeting got under way with speakers both supporting and opposing President Kennedy's moves. One warned 'We are on the verge of a nuclear war'. Later police prevented another rally outside the Guildhall where demonstrators hammered on the side of passing buses. 62 10 24

1962 11 06

Bonfire Night was very quiet this year. Police appeals for people to stay away from the city centre met with a good response and the streets were almost empty. Extensive use was made of radios and police with walkie-talkie sets moved on any groups from street corners. A University ban on students entering the city centre during the five hours before midnight was equally effective. Major incidents were few and far between and the elaborate measures taken proved more than adequate on one of the quietest Guy Fawkes nights for many years 62 11 06

1962 11 08

Poppy Day rag history – 61 11 08

1962 11 10

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1962 12 03

Undergraduates seek distribute Poppy Day money more widely [25.8]

1963 11 09

Cambridge had a carnival atmosphere for the annual Poppy Day Rag. A procession of 35 gay noisy floats was the first 'organised' procession in rag history. They depicted the Great Train Robbery and the Channel Tunnel. Degrees were sold outside the Senate House, passers-by were menaced with toy guns and undergraduates scrubbed zebra crossing, delaying motorists who were surrounded by students waving collecting tins. It was claimed that The Beatles pop group had been kidnapped and would be sold in Market Square. But News Agency reports say they were returning to Liverpool by car after a tour of Ireland. 63 11 09, a,b Austin car suspended under Bridge of Sighs [12.9,21.14]

1964 11

Last Rag to support only Earl Haig fund [36]

1965 01 14

Rag Day proceeds may be used to fund a youth centre for young people who live and work here. The bankside opposite Magdalene College would be an ideal site. There are good reasons: the college buildings are now awkwardly sited in relation to town development and will always be an encumbrance in terms of planning. Townspeople have to pay higher rates because of the specially low

rating allowed the colleges and industrial development has been restricted which would have provided new industries. As it is many children have to go to other towns to earn their livings. And when they reach marriageable age they have difficulty finding housing since so much land is taken up by the university.– 65 01 14a

1965 06 07

“Peace in Vietnam” banner at Kings [22.2]

1965 07 30

City vote not to change date Rag Day, student protest, seven colleges opt out boycott chosen charities [25.9]

1965 11 13

Rag Day quietest for years following controversy – 65 11 13, 65 11 15

1966 03 11

Rag Day: try again, split proceeds; Legion to collect on Poppy Day & undergraduates have rag week later with third to Legion; failure [25.10]

1966 04 11

University ban King Street run; started 40 years ago – 66 04 11a; does not take place 66 04 21c; takes place in authorities defiance of proctors – 66 04 28c

1967 10 28

Prime Minister Harold Wilson greeted by one of biggest demonstrations, 1,000 protestors encircle Guildhall – 67 10 28

1967 11 18

Fighting local youths & students, collecting tins snatched, flop [25.11]

1968 02 08

Cambridge Rag for 1968 is axed due to rowdyism and failing enthusiasm of undergraduates – 68 02 08

1968 11 25

Three-wheel car hung under Bridge of Sighs – details – 68 11 25a

1969 02 08

Prince Charles crowns Rag Queen- 69 02 08b, 69 02 15a

1969 02 15

Rag Day takes new look; parades off in break with Poppy tradition; squeeze into mini car – 69 02 15

1969 02 24

Rag switched to February, raise less than half, St Johns college loses £330, “such a flop people did not realise it was on” [25.13]

1969 02 25

Prince Charles as singing dustman in Rag revue – 69 02 25

1970

1970 02 14

“Garden House riot”: police make truncheon charge against mob of undergraduates who surged forward pinning score constables against shattered plate-glass windows causing £2,276 damage Garden House Hotel. City demand punishment for rioters 1000 march to Greek rally, 300 admit to being at anti-Junta demonstration four guilty of riot, seven acquitted; six sent prison periods 5-18 months, two sent to borstal. “GHR changed course of events; afterwards student violence died off, 11,280 at dinner, climax of Greek Week promoting holidays under Right-Wing military dictatorship; Police invoked Riot Act, not used for years. Judge Melford Stevenson said it most complete example of intelligent young people getting involved in complete bloody nonsense - 70 02 14, 14a, 14b, 70 02 18 & a. 70 06 24

1970 07 11

Proctors’ future for discipline to be considered – 70 07 11

1970 10 13

Proctors not to attend student political demonstrations which take place off university premises; they will subject only to police and civil law – 70 10 13; students vote to end proctors – 70 10 13b

1971 01 08

Rudi Dutschke who came to Britain in 1986 to recover from gunshot wounds and has been living at Clare Hall should not be allowed to stay, Tribunal recommends – 71 01 08; call for University strike – 71 01 11; students plan protest – 71 01 14; 1,000 students march – 71 01 16

1971 02 22

Rag Day violence forces decorated float procession to be abandoned – 71 02 22

1972

No more Rag queens crowned 82 02 26 [36]

1972 02 07

Undergraduate sit-in at Old Schools caused damage, forced way through doors into the Squire Law Library; carpet in Combination Room burned by cigarettes – 72 02 07 [5.7]

1972 03 10

Proctor injured in uproar, p1

1972 03 15

Students want proctor disciplined, p14

1972 06 02

Proctors feared pitched battle, p19

1973

Undergraduates drop Earl Haig fund, profits slump

1973 02 15

Student sit-ins in Cambridge should be met with firm action, and, if necessary, criminal proceedings says the University’s High Steward, Lord Devlin, in a report on student disturbances. In the report - arising out of last February’s occupation of university offices by students - his advice to the university for dealing with demonstrations is clear. First there should be “persuasion by the proctors and university constables, reinforced by enough physical presence to test the atmosphere”. If that fails the police should be called in and criminal proceedings instituted. Lord Devlin calls for more student participation in the university government, a forum for discussion of student vies and a better information service

1974 08 12

Rag Day move to August flops, 'enthusiasm an all-time low', energy crisis postpones rag to November [25.14, 36]

1975 04 28

The King Street run or the King Street pint to pint is a Cambridge drinking tradition. It means drinking eight pints of beer in two hours. In the old days King Street had enough ale houses for the Run to be held along it, but now the organisers have to plan the route incorporating public houses elsewhere. The run last year ended at The Zebra in Newmarket Road but licensee Mrs M. Warren won't be allowing it again. Last year youths who vomited in Fair Street outside the Hopbine bought a ban there on all future runs.

1976 02 13

Biggest crowd decade watch parade decorated vehicles [26.1]

1977

Jubilee year boosts fund raising 82 02 36 [36]

1978 03 07

Princess Anne mobbed at Rag Charity debate on 'Women's place is in the harem' [26.2]

1980

1980

CSU take over organisation Rag

1980 06 10

Chanting demonstrators broke through a security cordon at Queens' College Cambridge to protest at a stag night being held by male undergraduates. They 'invaded' from punts and burst through padlocked college gates before marching around outside the dining hall where 150 people were watching two strippers. The entertainment which included a blue comedian and a dirty limerick competition was organised to mark the college's last days as an all-male preserve. 80 06 10b

1980 11 13

The Chilean Ambassador was forced to clamber to safety across the rooftops of St John's College after demonstrators burst into the locked room in which he was addressing a private meeting of the Monday Club, a right-wing undergraduate society. He was ushered along a narrow ledge and through another window into a don's room while other opponents of the Chilean regime chanted and jeered from the courtyard below. He was unable to leave the college until police arrived to escort him away. 80 11 13a

1981 02 14

13 arrested RTZ demonstration Garden House Hotel (S. African mining co) [25.1]

1981 06 12

Rag raises record £14,000 [26.3]

1984 03 12

Despite rain and a wicked wind Cambridge University undergraduates astonished bystanders with their Rag Day activities. Prince Edward started a sponsored crawl to Grantchester, there were parachute jumps, exhibitions of motorbike skills and a tug of war. Some students with distinguished careers ahead of them leapt from Silver Street bridge into the Cam wearing whiskers, tails and picnic plates for ears in an attempt to fly across the river. Two perplexed French visitors summed it up: "If they are so clever, how can they be so stupid?" 84 03 12 p7

1985 01 24

Rag team bid to heal 12-year rift, 'spirit of 60s when town & gown united' [26.4] "things started to go sour in the mid-60s when politically-aware students started griping at allocation money, break from Poppy Day marked point at which town lost sympathy, less tolerant of flour bombs, rotten tomatoes, water pistols & eggs; even in jubilee year was systematic hooliganism ... [37]

1985 03 11

Cambridge's student prince, Prince Edward, has helped to make this year's Rag Week a record-breaker. His appearance in the Rag Revue made the show a sell-out and he is guest-of-honour at the first Charity Ball where the raffle winner will lead off the first waltz with the fair-haired prince. Other rag events included mud wrestling, birdmen leaping from Silver Street Bridge and silly sports such as a tug-of-war across the river and an egg-throwing competition. It ended with punt-jousting and a mixed three-legged rugby match. 85 03 11b

1986 03 03

Rag week parade – 86 03 03a

1986 06 18

A K-registered Ford Escort was found dangling from Clare College Bridge. The vehicle came from a scrapyard but it remains a mystery how it got there. One theory is that it was brought down the Cam on punts then hoisted up and lashed into place with ropes and chains. The jolly jape brought laughter from river users but now the college is faced with removing it. They are seeking advice from King's who last year removed a Fiat that was 'parked' in the middle of the river on stilts 86 06 18c